

CTV 06-1, comments

**TOWN OF NORFOLK****ONE LIBERTY LANE
NORFOLK, MASSACHUSETTS 02056****Town Administrator****(508) 528-1408 -Office****(508) 541-3366 - Fax****August 10, 2006**

**Ms. Andrea Nixon
Clerk, Cable Television Division
Department of Telecommunications and Energy
One South Station
Boston, MA 02111**

Dear Ms. Nixon;

The Town of Norfolk would like to register its strong opposition to Verizon's March 16, 2006 rulemaking petition filed with the Cable Division of the Department of Telecommunications and Energy. Verizon's petition proposes extremely unreasonable new rules for initial cable licensing.

The proposed rules would require a municipality to hold a public hearing on an initial cable television license application within sixty (60) days of filing the application, and would require only thirty (30) days from the time of the public hearing for the municipality to approve or disapprove the application and issue the actual license in case of approval.

As many local officials have told you, it is impossible to conclude a proper initial license application review, negotiation, license drafting and issuance within thirty (30) days of the public hearing. Such an initial licensing time frame would be untenable in the best of circumstances, and is particularly untenable now in light of the many questions of first impression and complex issues raised by the non-standard terms and conditions commonly reported to be included in Verizon-proposed cable licenses.

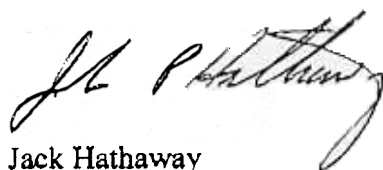
As you know from RCN's initial licensing experience, cable operators willing to negotiate customary and standard cable licenses enjoy reasonable and fast municipal licensing. The existing license timetables have worked well for decades. They should not be changed at the benefit of a single proponent. Note that Congress contemplated and provided for a three-year renewal process when it more comprehensively and carefully set forth cable licensing rules for the 1984 Cable Act. This framework worked well for decades and there is no rational basis for casting aside the time tested licensing rules and replacing them with radically abbreviated ones.

Municipal officials who are responsible for implementing licensing and who are accountable to the public are in opposition to these proposed rules. Norfolk's municipal officials are concerned that under the proposed rules, our community and cities and towns across the State will be boxed into an untenable thirty (30) day post-hearing licensing process, and will lose the ability to properly review and negotiate Verizon's cable proposals. This is not even close to what is reasonably needed for a fair and reasonable licensing process. The Massachusetts Cable Division should reject Verizon's petition and allow local officials to continue serving its constituents as they have been doing for decades.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

If you should have any questions or desire further comments, please do not hesitate to contact this office.

Sincerely,



Jack Hathaway
Town Administrator

cc: Norfolk Board of Selectmen
Norfolk Cable Television